



## FACT SHEET FOR PROVIDERS

### **CDC Recommends That All Children Aged 6 to 59 Months Get a Flu Shot**

ACIP has updated its recommendations for the 2006-07 influenza season. The recommendation for vaccination of children now included all children 6-59 months (the previous recommendation was for children 6-23 months.) In addition, it is recommended that out-of-home caregivers and household contacts for all infants and children 6-59 months be vaccinated.

#### ***Children less than 2 years old are more likely to be hospitalized by flu.***

Studies have shown that children less than 2 years old—even healthy children—are more likely than older children to end up in the hospital with serious complications if they get influenza. These complications can include pneumonia, dehydration, worsening of long-term medical problems like heart disease or asthma, encephalopathy, and other bacterial infections, including sinus and ear infections. In some cases, these complications can lead to death. It is estimated that each year in the U.S., there are more than 20,000 children less than 5 years old hospitalized due to flu.

#### ***Children aged 24-59 months have more outpatient and emergency room visits.***

A recent NEJM article [Poehling, *et al.*, below] demonstrated that there is an under-recognized burden of influenza in young children, with outpatient visits 10 to 250 times as common as hospitalizations, with the highest rates in children 24 to 59 months of age. Based on this and other evidence, the 2004 ACIP recommendation was expanded to endorse vaccination recommendations for children up to 5 years old.

#### ***To protect their health, all children 6 to 59 months old should be vaccinated against the flu.***

Two doses must be administered at least 28 days apart for children who have not been vaccinated against influenza before. Children previously vaccinated only need one dose.

The flu shot is not approved for use in children less than 6 months old.

#### ***Therefore, to prevent transmission to infants, vaccination is recommended for all household contacts and caregivers of children aged 0–59 months.***

#### ***References:***

[Poehling KA, Edwards KM, Weinberg GA, Szilagyi P, Staat MA, Iwane MK, Bridges CB, Grijalva CG, Zhu Y, Bernstein DI, Herrera G, Erdman D, Hall CB, Seither R, Griffin MR; New Vaccine Surveillance Network.](#)

The underrecognized burden of influenza in young children.

N Engl J Med. 2006 Jul 6;355(1):31-40.

PMID: 16822994 [PubMed - indexed for MEDLINE]

[Grijalva CG, Craig AS, Dupont WD, Bridges CB, Schrag SJ, Iwane MK, Schaffner W, Edwards KM, Griffin MR.](#) Estimating influenza hospitalizations among children.

## **CDC Recommends That All Children Aged 6 to 59 Months Get a Flu Shot**

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Emerg Infect Dis. 2006 Jan; 12(1):103-9.

PMID: 16494725 [PubMed - indexed for MEDLINE]

[Thompson WW, Shay DK, Weintraub E, Brammer L, Bridges CB, Cox NJ, Fukuda K.](#) Estimating influenza hospitalizations among children.

Emerg Infect Dis. 2006 Jan;12(1):103-9.

PMID: 16494725 [PubMed - indexed for MEDLINE]

### ***Influenza-related deaths in children***

CDC began collecting reports of influenza-associated deaths in children in 2003, and in 2004, influenza-associated deaths in children became a nationally reportable condition. Following is a summary of information collected on influenza deaths in children reported since the 2003-04 flu season.

- **2005-06 season**

During the 2005-06 influenza season, CDC received reports of 35 influenza-related deaths among children (people under 18 years old) from 13 states.

- **2004-05 season**

During the 2004-05 influenza season, CDC received reports of 39 influenza-related deaths among children (people under 18 years old) from 17 states.

- **2003-04 season**

During the 2003-04 influenza season, CDC received reports of 152 influenza-related deaths among children (people under 18 years old) from 40 states.

- All of these children had laboratory-confirmed influenza infections.
- Most of the children were less than 5 years old.
- 27% of the children had a condition that placed them at high risk for serious complications from influenza and were recommended for vaccination by ACIP. 31% had some other underlying medical condition.
- 40% of the children were previously healthy.
- Of the 135 children who died that could have been vaccinated, only 5 were "adequately" vaccinated against influenza.
- 76 children had not been vaccinated against influenza at all.

For more information, visit [www.cdc.gov/flu](http://www.cdc.gov/flu),  
or call CDC at 800-CDC-INFO (English and Spanish) or 888-232-6348 (TTY).